

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0266

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS AS INFO SPECAT EXCLUSIVE TO SECNAV FOR UNDERSEC
WOOLSEY, SECDEF FOR ISA, USCINCEUR, CINCUSAFE, CINCUSNAVEUR, CINC-
USAREUR, USNMR SHAPE, AND USDOCOSOUTH

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MARR, MASS, NATO, GR
SUBJ: MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF'S COMMENTS ON GREEK DCA AND
NATO RELATIONSHIP

1. DURING CALL BY NAVY UNDER SECRETARY WOOLSEY AND ME ON MINISTER
OF DEFENSE AVEROFF (WHO WAS AT HOME WITH FLU), THE CONVERSATION RE-
VOLVED AROUND PROBLEMS OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND GREECE'S
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S., TURKEY AND NATO. AVEROFF MADE A WIDE-
RANGING PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS
WHICH UNDERLIE PRESENT GOG POSITIONS ON THESE ISSUES, AND MOST
OF WHAT HE HAD TO SAY IS FAMILIAR TO ADDRESSEES. HIS COMMENTS ON
THE STATUS AND FUTURE OF THE U.S.-GREEK DCA AND ON THE KIND OF RE-
LATIONSHIP GREECE COULD ACCEPT WITH NATO, HOWEVER, REVEAL HIS CUR-
RENT THINKING ON THESE MATTERS, WHICH HE ADMITTED WAS IN SOME IN-
STANCES AT VARIANCE WITH THE OFFICIAL GOG POSITION, AND I PASS A
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DISTILLATION OF HIS COMMENTS FOR WHAT IT MAY BE WORTH. PLEASE
PROTECT HIS CONFIDENCE.

2. AVEROFF EMPHASIZED THAT BECAUSE OF EVENTS DURING THE PAST FEW
YEARS THE GREEK PEOPLE NOW VIEW TURKEY RATHER THAN THE SOVIET UNION
AND ITS COMMUNIST ALLIES AS THE PRINCIPAL THREAT TO GREECE. IN HIS
VIEW, THIS IS REGRETTABLE BUT UNDERSTANDABLE BECAUSE OF TURKISH

ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE CREATED THE SUSPICION HERE THAT TURKEY HAS EMBARKED ON A NEW EXPANSIONIST PHASE AND HAS DESIGNS ON GREEK TERRITORY AND LEGAL RIGHTS IN THE AEGEAN. THE U.S. MUST THEREFORE BE CAREFUL THAT ITS ACTIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN DO NOT SO UNBALANCE THE RELATIVE MILITARY POWER OF GREECE AND TURKEY THAT THE LATTER MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO TRY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES BY MILITARY ACTION.

3. THAT IS THE REASON, AVEROFF INSISTED, THAT GREECE FELT COMPELLED IN 1976 TO REQUIRE A \$700 MILLION MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE AS PART OF THE DCA AFTER THE U.S. PROMISED TURKEY \$1 BILLION. HE SEES THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FACILITIES HERE AS BEING IN GREECE'S OWN SECURITY INTERESTES AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE U.S. AND NATO, AND FOR THAT REASON IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE DCA AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT GREECE WANTS TO SELL OR RENT THE FACILITIES. IN DEFENDING THE DCA PUBLICLY AFTER IT IS SIGNED AND SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT, AVEROFF SAID HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE THIS APPARENT PRICE TAG ATTACHED, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND HE WOULD NOT WANT TO CONCLUDE THE GREEK DCA WITHOUT THE AID COMMITMENT AND THEN HAVE TO RETURN HAT-IN-HAND FOR THE MONEY IF THE TURKS GET THEIR BILLION DOLLARS FROM CONGRESS.

4. AVEROFF PERSONALLY THINKS THE DCA WITH THE U.S. COULD AND SHOULD BE SIGNED WITHOUT NECESSARILY TYING IT TO SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM OR RESOLUTION OF GREECE'S NEW RELATIONSHIP TO NATO. HE SAID THAT IN INNER-CABINET MEETINGS HE HAD TAKEN THAT POSITION, ALTHOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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HE UNDERSTANDS AND OF COURSE ACCEPTS THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONTRARY DECISION. A TELLING ARGUMENT IN AVEROFF'S OPINION FOR NOT GOING FORWARD WITH THE DCA NOW IS THAT THE OPPOSITION MIGHT CALL FOR A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUE WHICH, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SOLUTION TO THE BROADER PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD GIVE THE GOG A CREDIBLE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH TO DEFEND THE DCA, COULD TEAR THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FABRIC APART.

5. RESTORING THE GREEK-NATO RELATIONSHIP WILL BE A LOT EASIER THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK, AVEROFF CONTENTED. GREECE IS PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE FULLY IN NATO PLANNING, EXERCISES, INFRA-STRUCTURE PREPARATIONS, INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF FULL MILITARY MEMBERSHIP, AS LONG AS IT RETAINS NATIONAL CONTROL OVER ITS ARMED FORCES IN PEACETIME SO AS ALWAYS TO BE PREPARED TO MEET THE PERCEIVED TURKISH THREAT. NATO'S DELAY IN RESPONDING TO THE GOG PROPOSAL OF JANUARY 27, 1977, HE SAID, AND "OBSTRUCTIONS" CREATED BY "CERTAIN COUNTRIES" WHICH HAVE PREVENTED GREATER GREEK PARTICIPATION IN NATO MILITARY AFFAIRS HAVE LED SOME GOG OFFICIALS TO CONCLUDE THAT NATO DOES NOT WISH GREECE BACK IN THE FOLD AND IS TRYING TO FORCE IT EITHER TO ACCEPT UNACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS OR WITHDRAW COMPLETELY. AVEROFF SAID HE HAS THUS FAR BEEN ABLE TO DEFEND NATO AGAINST THESE CHARGES BY EXPLAINING THE CONTEXT IN WHICH NATO

DECISIONS AND ACTIONS ARE TAKING PLACE, BUT THE CONTINUING DELAY
IS EMBARRASSING TO THOSE IN GREECE WHO ARE WORKING FOR A RESTORED
GREEK-NATO RELATIONSHIP.

MILLS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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